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LETTER DATED 10 MAY 1996 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my letter No. 672 of 8 May 1996 (S/1996/342) transmitting a letter from Mr. Omar Mustafa Al-Muntasser, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, concerning statements being made by officials of the United States Administration regarding the taking of military action against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, I should like to bring to your attention a selection of articles which have appeared in the United States press. They reflect the intention harboured by the United States of America of undertaking military action against my country. I am also enclosing a copy of the letter from Member of Congress Elizabeth Furse addressed to President Clinton, in which she expresses her concern that the United States Administration is advocating using a nuclear weapon to destroy an alleged chemical weapons plant in Libya.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ali Sunni MUNTASSER
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

ELIZABETH FURSE
1st District, Oregon

COMMITTEE:
COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE, AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND FINANCE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–3701

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May 3, 1996

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to express my deep concern that your Administration is advocating using a nuclear weapon to destroy Libya's suspected chemical weapons plant. Any consideration of using a nuclear weapon is simply unacceptable.

It was very troubling to me that Harold Smith, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs, suggested last week that the U.S. might use a nuclear weapon in the case of Libya. It has been a matter of U.S. policy since 1978 that we will not use nuclear weapons against any country that has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Libya is a signatory to that treaty.

In your State of the Union address this year, you stressed the need for a Comprehensive Test Ban. Administration officials talking about using a nuclear weapon damages the likelihood of achieving a CTB. Moreover, Mr. Smith's proposal stands in direct opposition to the stance taken by the U.S. on April 11 of this year when we signed the protocol associated with the African Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Treaty. That protocol says we will not threaten the use of nuclear weapons against signers of the treaty, of which Libya is one.

Finally, I believe this tactic circumvents the spirit if not the letter of the legislation I passed last year requiring Nuclear Weapons Council approval of any new nuclear weapons development.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding what actions you plan to take to prevent this kind of irresponsible discussion.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Furse

Elizabeth Furse
Member of Congress

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U.S. warns it would destroy Libyan facility

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration stepped up its threat against a suspected Libyan chemical weapons plant Thursday, publishing an artist's rendition of the underground facility and asserting that America has the high-tech weapons needed to destroy it.

At a Pentagon briefing, Defense Secretary William J. Perry all but encouraged reporters to take his warning last week — that the United States would not permit Libya to complete construction of the facility — as an outright threat to bomb the plant if necessary.

"You know the announcement and the statement that I have made on that," Perry said. "If you want to consider that a warning to Libya, you can so consider it."

Washington charges that a plant being built inside a mountain at Tarhunah, 40 miles southeast of the Libyan capital of Tripoli, is a chemical weapons facility.

As Perry made his thinly veiled threat, other U.S. officials dismissed suggestions by some experts that the United States does not yet have the ground-penetrating munitions to wipe out the plant. They cited the GBU-28, a 4,700-pound laser-guided bomb developed during the Persian Gulf War, as one possibility. The weapon can penetrate through more than 100 feet of earth or 22 feet of hardened concrete, they said — presumably enough to knock out or destroy the Libyan facility.

The rhetoric coincided with Libya's offer to begin talks "without preconditions" about the U.S. charges. Omar Muntasser, Libya's foreign minister, dismissed the allegations Thursday as "another lie by U.S. intelligence." But he said Libya is willing to discuss the accusations "with any country who will agree to talk to us."

U.S. officials said later that Perry had not intended to suggest that a U.S. bombing raid on Libya is imminent. They said the United States would first seek to block construction of the plant through diplomatic measures, pressuring foreign suppliers and technicians.

"There are many ways to attack these capabilities," Army Lt. Gen. Patrick Hughes, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, told reporters at a briefing. "We don't merely have to drop a bomb on them."

— FROM NEWS SERVICE REPORTS

THE RECORD

LIBYA

Targeting a Buried Threat

MUAMMAR KADDAFI THINKS the chemical-weapons plant he's building inside a mountain 45 miles from Tripoli will be impervious to anything but nuclear attack. Officially the Clinton administration hopes the Libyan leader can be persuaded to abandon the project. But Defense Department planners have stepped up work on new bombs and warheads that burrow deep underground before exploding. Even without a new weapon, DOD sources

Not so safe: Kaddafi

say, U.S. forces could take out the facility. NEWSWEEK has learned that the options being considered include:

- The "Tutankhamen effect"—precipitating a rock slide to bury the entrances to the tunnels leading into the mountain.
- Destroying the plant by causing an explosion that would suck all the oxygen out of the underground chambers.
- Contaminating the complex so it is unusable for years.
- Direct assault. "We could be knocking on the doors of the place before Kaddafi even knew we were coming," says a DOD source.

Says one senior official: "That plant is not going to be allowed to operate."

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The NEW YORK TIMES

19th April, 1996

On My Mind

A. M. ROSENTHAL

Relaying Warning To Libya

WASHINGTON

Deep inside a mountain, Libya is building the world's largest underground poison gas plant. Short of a bombing raid, which the United States is preparing for if it comes to that, the Clinton Administration is doing everything it can to deliver a message to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi: Stop while you have the chance.

Those are some of the realities that make Libya and its chemical weapons program a major security issue and a critical military and diplomatic planning operation for the U.S. And these are four others:

1. Any debate inside the Government about whether the U.S. should use military power if needed to prevent the plan from going into operation is over. The conclusion is that Libya wants the plant as a shortcut to Mideast power. The colonel would become the quartermaster of poison gas and mustard gas weapons for terrorist groups and such countries as Iran and North Korea. Then the spread of chemical weapons would make them, like land mines, a military plague beyond effective containment — but with mass loss of life.

2. Using European products, Asian go-betweens and Iranian money, Libya built the plant so deep into the mountain that the U.S. does not now have acceptable military weapons to destroy it. Unhappily, the U.S. did not fully comprehend what was going on

Qaddafi: Read the no-guarantees clause.

until it became impossible to knock the plant out with acceptable weapons already in the arsenal.

3. Bombing by large nuclear weapons is not acceptable. The danger of drifting radioactive fallout is so terrifying that it has been ruled out.

But as a last resort, the use of a "small" nuclear weapon that could penetrate the mountain and destroy the plant without exterior fallout has not been dismissed. The U.S. expects to have such a weapon by 1997 — a year before the plant might go into operation.

4. More likely would be a non-nuclear bomb that after penetration of the mountain would detonate another, spreading fire. The twin bomb would not destroy the plant. But it would put it out of operation long enough to give the colonel a choice: Shut the place down or invite more raids.

So far, in two tests at White Sands, N.M., the fuse of the second bomb did not work. Research and testing go on.

Meanwhile Washington is trying to stop Colonel Qaddafi from completing the plant, at Tarhunah, without the U.S. having to take military action. By the time Washington discovered the full extent of the plant in 1992, a couple of years after work began, it was three underground stories high, thousands of square feet large, a network of caverns connected by two-way truck-wide lanes.

For about three years the counter-operation was secret — an effort to break Libyan foreign supply lines. Huge earthmovers and drills were sold by Europeans to middlemen in Asian countries, bomb-shelter blueprints may have come from Russia, and "dual-use" chemicals arrived from around the world — "peaceful" in themselves but part of the first stage of making poison gases.

Washington believes it broke enough supply-line connections to slow the Libyans down, but not enough to stop them.

Now the U.S. has gone public with warnings it will not allow the plant to go into operation. Defense Secretary William Perry, intelligence chief John Deutch and Gen. John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have delivered them. The U.S. is trying to build a coalition of Arab and European leaders to persuade Libya to stop, or at least support America politically if military action is needed. (There's some talk of economic "inducements," but a Marshall plan for Libya would not make Americans cheer.)

That's the American double track — avoid attack on the plant if possible, but prepare for it unless construction ends. Washington wants the colonel to know all that.

I think that's why I was able to gather much of the material for this column, after I wrote my first on the danger of the plant on Feb. 27. If so, I am glad to be part of the warning to Libya.

I also think I was encouraged to believe next year is the cutoff point of U.S. patience. But the U.S. officials I dealt with are extremely sophisticated. Could it be, colonel, that an attack might come earlier so you better stop now? No guarantees on American timing go with this column's conveyed message. □